

Brave Scots edged by Hockeyroos in Commonwealth Games

Commonwealth Games: women hockey: Pool B: Australia 2, Scotland 0 (at The University of Birmingham)

Scotland will know if they are in the fifth/sixth play-off on Thursday morning after ruled being out of medal contention in the women's hockey competition in the Commonwealth Games.

They suffered a 2-0 defeat by Australia in their final Pool B game leaving coach Chris Duncan's squad with six points from four games after beating South Africa 4-2 and Kenya 11-0.

Their fate rests in the hands of New Zealand and South Africa. If New Zealand draw or win then Scotland play Canada, who lost 3-2 to India in their final Pool A game, on Sunday, but it will be the seventh/eighth play-off on Friday if South Africa sneak a win by two clear goals.

Scotland's best finish in the Games was fifth in the competition on their debut in 1998 when they were awarded fifth equal rather than fifth outright as there were no classification games in that competition and the Tartan Hearts were fifth again in Melbourne in 2006.

Goals by Grace Stewart after 28 minutes and Shanea Tonkin after 47 minutes sunk the Scots who were engulfed by the Yellow Submarine, particularly in the final two quarters of the match at The University of Birmingham.

Yellow-shirted Australia pressed high at every opportunity, forcing the Scots to defend in depth, but goalkeepers Nicola Cochrane and Amy Gibson excelled once again.

The Tartan Hearts' best spell came in the opening session,

University of Edinburgh star Jess Ross threatening from the right after a turnover on half-way, flashing a shot across goal in a bruising battle.

Scotland's captain, Sarah Robertson, a bronze medallist at the Tokyo Olympics, was surrounded by up to four players as Australia pressed relentlessly forward.

The breakthrough came following a penalty corner award given when Australia called for a referral for dangerous play, the ball having lifted off the surface onto a shoulder.

The Hockeyroos failed from the penalty corner but followed up, Stewart firing the ball home low after pivoting in the D Scotland held firm despite intense pressure and goal No 2 came after a second referral, again for dangerous play, this time for the ball lifting from the pads of the goalkeeper, Tonkin making no mistake from close range.

Coach Chris Duncan, the director of hockey at The Edinburgh Academy, said: "Australia are relentless and the girls fronted up to try and play through but, overall, it is a weird feeling, to be honest, as there is a bit of what might have been in there."

He added: "Their analysis department obviously did their due diligence on us, shutting down our ball carriers and key players and that is the professionalism we need to show. We just didn't quite get a foothold higher up the pitch."

He added: "In years gone by, when I wasn't in this role, the thought of Scotland losing 2-0 to Australia would have indicated that the team were doing really well.

"However, the team here competed for large chunks of the game. We tried to be aggressive and tried to get on the front foot, but, overall, we have given a good account of ourselves at this tournament.

Ultimately, he said, the two goals conceded came from Scotland errors, but he added: "You don't get to No 3 in the world and win World Cup bronze without playing the way they do."

"We won't know until Thursday who we play in our play-off game, but we want to finish as high as we possibly can. That will be our final, whoever we play."

PICTURE: Louise Campbell, one of the Scotland players on duty against Australia, standing beside Perry the Games mascot, in Birmingham with a placard with her nickname